

CROW INDIAN TRIBE



Resources Report

I N T R O D U C T I O N

INTRODUCTION

Purpose of this Report

The Crow Tribe of Indians has responded to a request from the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) to prepare an assessment and report on resources of the Crow Indian Reservation, including natural resources, socio-economic conditions, and cultural resources. The Crow Tribe's report is intended to identify and characterize the affected environment of the reservation for purposes of inclusion in the *Montana Statewide Revised Draft/Final Oil and Gas Environmental Impact Statement and Amendment of the Powder River and Billings Resource Management Plans (Statewide Revised Draft/Final Oil and Gas EIS)*. The Tribe's report does not address potential environmental impacts that may result from development of oil and gas resources on tribal lands or throughout the Powder River Basin of Montana and Wyoming.

In consultation with the BLM, the Crow Tribe initiated collection of data for this document in January 2002. The Tribe prepared this document between March 1 and April 15, 2002. Data collection continued through the period of preparation for the document. As a result of the brief schedule for data collection and document preparation, certain tribal agencies may have been unable to assemble and provide information relevant to this document.

While this document presents information about the Crow Tribe and the Crow Indian Reservation for inclusion in the Statewide Revised Draft/Final Oil and Gas EIS, the Tribe does not consider it to be complete for purposes of evaluating any specific project related to exploration or production of oil and gas resources on or near the reservation.

The format of this document is based on the format of Chapter 3: Affected Environment in the Statewide Revised Draft/Final Oil and Gas EIS. To the extent information was available in the schedule for data collection and document preparation (i.e., January-April 15, 2002), this document addresses the affected environment related to the resources of the Crow Indian Reservation.

This document does not represent comments by the Crow Tribe about the content of the Statewide Draft Oil and Gas EIS. The Tribe will provide those comments as participants in the public hearing process for that document.

Reservation Location

The Crow Indian Reservation is located in south central Montana, bordered by Wyoming to the south and the Northern Cheyenne Indian Reservation to the east. The reservation encompasses approximately 2.3 million acres, which includes the northern end of the BASAWAXAAWUUA (Bighorn Mountains), CHEETIISH (Wolf Mountains) and BAAHPUUO ISAWAXAAWUUA (Pryor Mountains). The Bighorn River flows north from Yellowtail Dam and joins the Little Bighorn River just outside Hardin, Montana. The city of Billings is approximately 10 miles northwest of the reservation boundary. *Figure 1* is a map showing the reservation boundary as defined by the September 17, 1851 Fort Laramie Treaty and by federal statutes and case law.

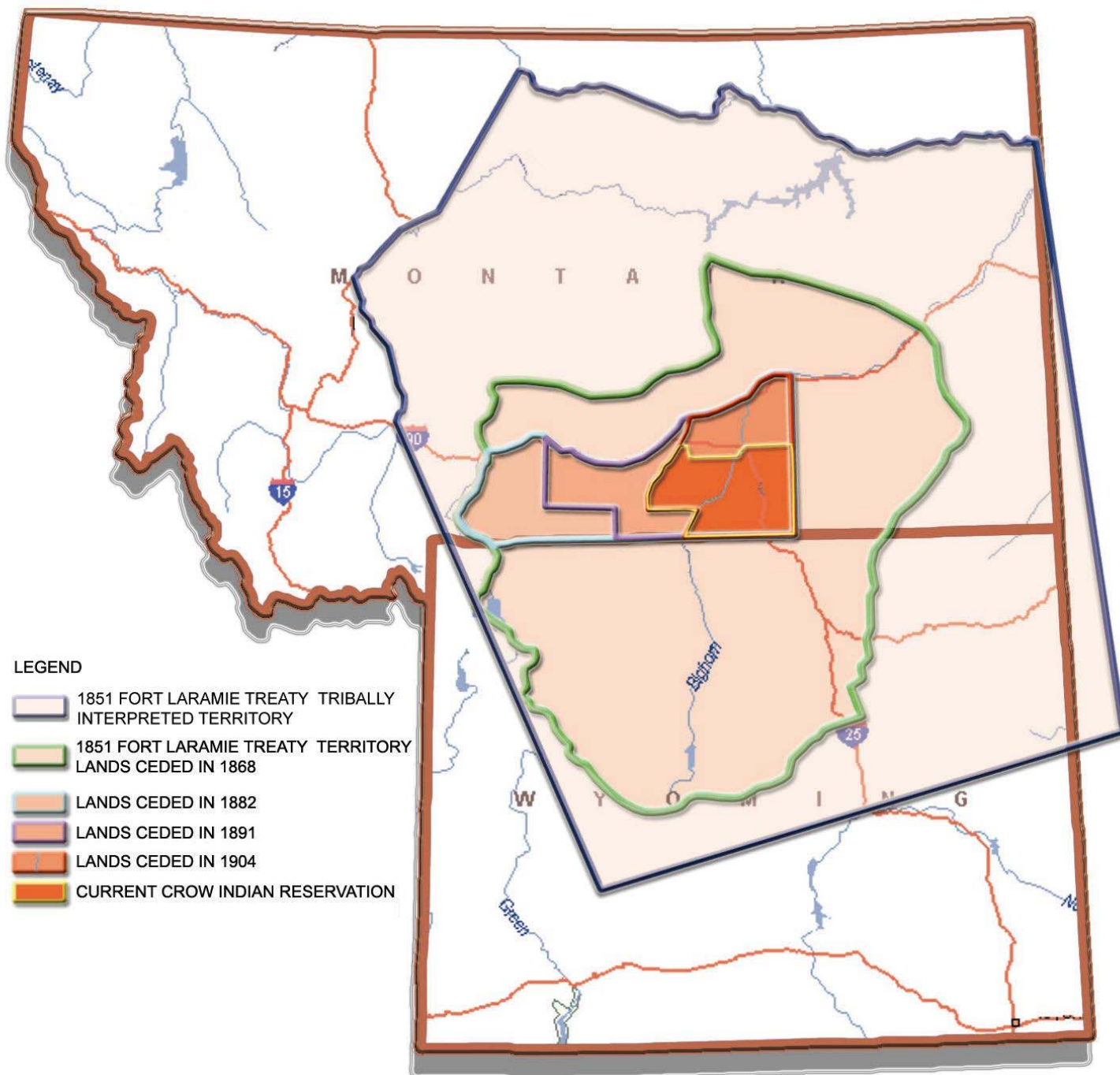


Figure 1
Reservation Location and Historical Boundaries



Reservation Communities

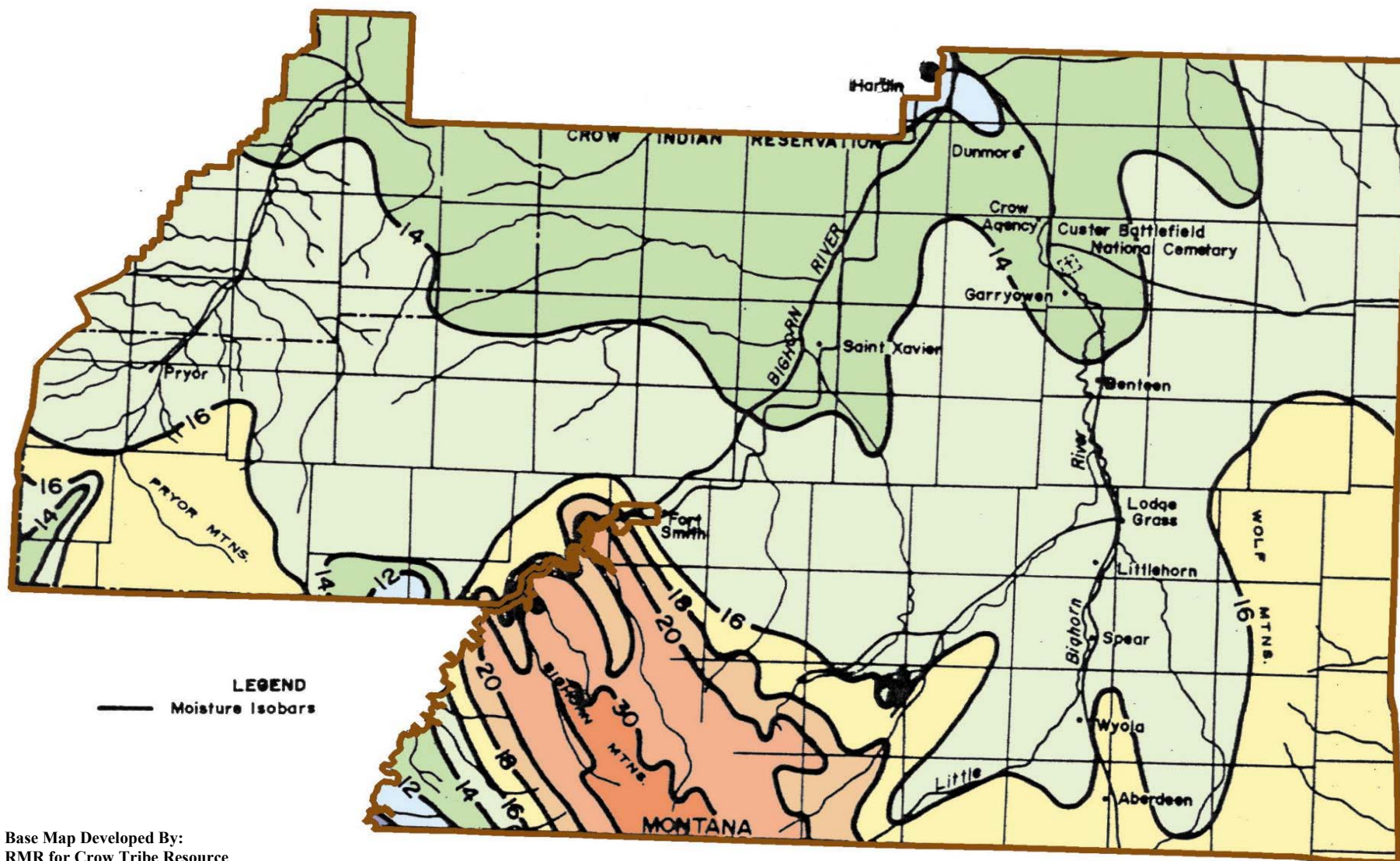
The reservation communities of Crow Agency, Saint Xavier, Yellowtail (Fort Smith), Lodge Grass, Wyola, and Pryor are known for their own uniqueness. The Crow Tribe recognizes two districts that originally were named by Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA) agents a century ago. The community of Crow Agency is referred to as Reno District, and Saint Xavier and Fort Smith are called the Big Horn District.

Climate

The climate on the reservation varies from humid above 7,000 feet in the Bighorn Mountains, with 24 inches of annual precipitation, to semi-arid around 2,900 feet near Hardin, with 12 inches of annual precipitation. *Figure 2* is a map showing precipitation averages across the reservation. Vegetation varies from conifer forests to grasslands. Approximately 75% of the precipitation falls from March through July. The frost-free period (growing season) ranges from 115 days at Busby, 123 days at Hardin, 126 days at Wyola, to 135 days at Crow Agency. The last spring frost occurs as late as May 24 and frost may occur as early as September 16th.

This portion of Montana enjoys "Indian Summers" which frequently extend into November. This is a time of warm sunny days and cool evenings. The mean annual temperature is 45.5 degrees Fahrenheit (F) with a summer high of 110 and a winter low of -48 degrees F.

AVERAGE ANNUAL PRECIPITATION ON THE CROW INDIAN RESERVATION



Base Map Developed By:
RMR for Crow Tribe Resource
Development and Land Use Plans



Figure 2
Reservation Annual Precipitation

Report developed by
LAO Environmental
Billings, Montana

